

“The Adventure Game” Level design Document



Enchanting Waterfall City - Fantasy HD Wallpaper by Jeremy Fenske

Single Player level by Dawid Gaşiorowski

Project Details

Technology used:	Unreal Engine 5
Genre:	TPP action adventure
Development time:	3,5 months
Role:	Level designer
Estimated playthrough:	~27 minutes
Assets used:	Advanced Locomotion System V4 - LongmireLocomotion Custom Movement - JU SIK LEE Fantasy Bundle Environment Kit 3 in 1 - Denys Rutkovskiy Ultimate FPS Puzzle Kit - FirstContent GOOD SKY - Uneasy Game Dev Greek Island - Scale X Military Weapons Silver - Adia Entertainment Modular Lost Ruins Kit - KK Design Stylized Character Kit: Casual 01 - Epic Games SuperGrid Starter pack - ZeOrb Tangkoko Nature Reserve - Sulawesi, Indonesia by RTB45 -- https://freesound.org/s/254860/ -- License: Attribution 4.0 THunder_recorded_2021_Summer_02.wav by benmerrill328 -- https://freesound.org/s/613276/ -- License: Creative Commons 0 Heavy rain with thunder by mrsorbias -- https://freesound.org/s/530188/ -- License: Attribution 4.0 onweer08063.mp3 by Charel Sytze -- https://freesound.org/s/36063/ -- License: Attribution 3.0 Rain_and_thunder_2.mp3 by SoundAppProject -- https://freesound.org/s/537555/ -- License: Creative Commons 0 UH-60 Blackhawk by KoffeinFlummi (www.turbosquid.com) Hook-3d-model-2108400 (www.turbosquid.com)

Overview

Design Intention:

The point of this level was to take the player through various challenges like traversal, exploration, combat and puzzles dispersed in various configuration throughout the area.

Who is the player:

The player takes the role of a Treasure Hunter. His goal is to find an ancient relic, lost for centuries that holds a great value in the collectors community. Driven by money, the Treasure Hunter embarks on journey to the remote island on the Pacific ocean, where He quickly learns He is not alone.

Target and motivation:

The player has to find an ancient temple that hold the relic. Due to the storm raging in the area at the time of arrival, he also needs to find a way off the island. Luckily, the PMC forces present on the island may hold a key to escape.

Where is the missions location:

The mission is located on a remote island in the middle of the Pacific. The player starts on a rocky beach, where his boat has crashed and has to make his way up through rocks and jungles in order to reach the temple looming on the horizon. Right before the temple though, he has to face a private army situated in the village in front of the temple.

Level Objectives

Main Objectives

- Find the way through the beach
- Reach the Temple
- Obtain the relic
- Escape the Island

Secondary Objectives

- Find the smaller treasures scattered around the island

Main Locations

The Beach

Full of sharp rocks, the beach is a starting area for the level, where the player learns the traversal mechanics such as climbing, mantling and jumping. After this section, in a connection point between the jungle and the beach, the player acquires a grappling hook.



Fig. 1: Rocky beach - El Salvador : Wikipedia



Fig. 2: Oliver Sjöström - from Pexels

The Two-storied jungle

Begins at a reveal point of the players goal, the Temple. The jungle section is split into two stories, broken by a first combat encounter, more advanced traversal challenge and a puzzle. After the player conquers those obstacles, they can return to the lower section via the elevator connecting the two. The areas are open and full of secrets, inviting the player to explore.

The Village

Situated on a side of the mountain, the Village is the main combat encounter of this level as it is a base of operation for stationed PMC units. Combat is split into two phases. First plays out while player is on the ground and clears the village of all the threats present. Second begins once they reach the rooftops of the village. After these encounters the player can use the zipline to slide onto the bridge leading to the temple.



Fig. 3: Enchanting Waterfall City - Fantasy HD Wallpaper by Jeremy Fenske

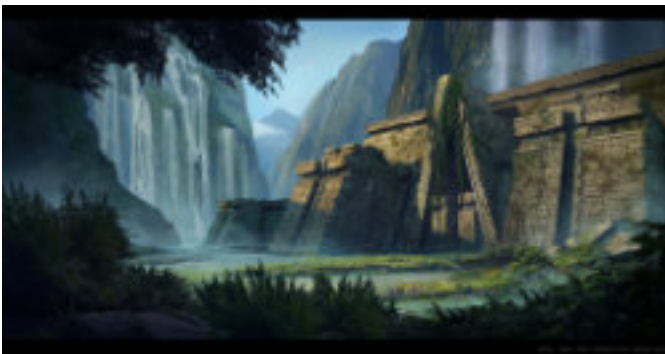


Fig. 4: Marta Leydy - Ancient Jungle Temple

The Temple

Connected to land via a bridge, the Temple is locked by a totems, each requiring different approach to reach. After the outside section, the inside is a more complex version, requiring better skills in puzzle solving and traversal. After the player reach their goal of acquiring the relic, PMC who's been digging into the temple from behind, breach the walls and starts attacking the player. With no way back, the player pushes through them, culminating in a fight with the leader, after which the player steals the helicopter and flies off.

Level map

GUIDE

- ① Ref. image
- Main path
- Side paths



GamePlay

Weapons & Items

During the early stages of the level, the player will be introduced to new mechanic, Grappling Hook which will allow for new traversal challenges.

Later on, the player will receive a rifle, that will help in upcoming showdown in the Village.

Pistol

Rifle

Key Item: Grappling Hook

Rare Items: Artifacts

Puzzles

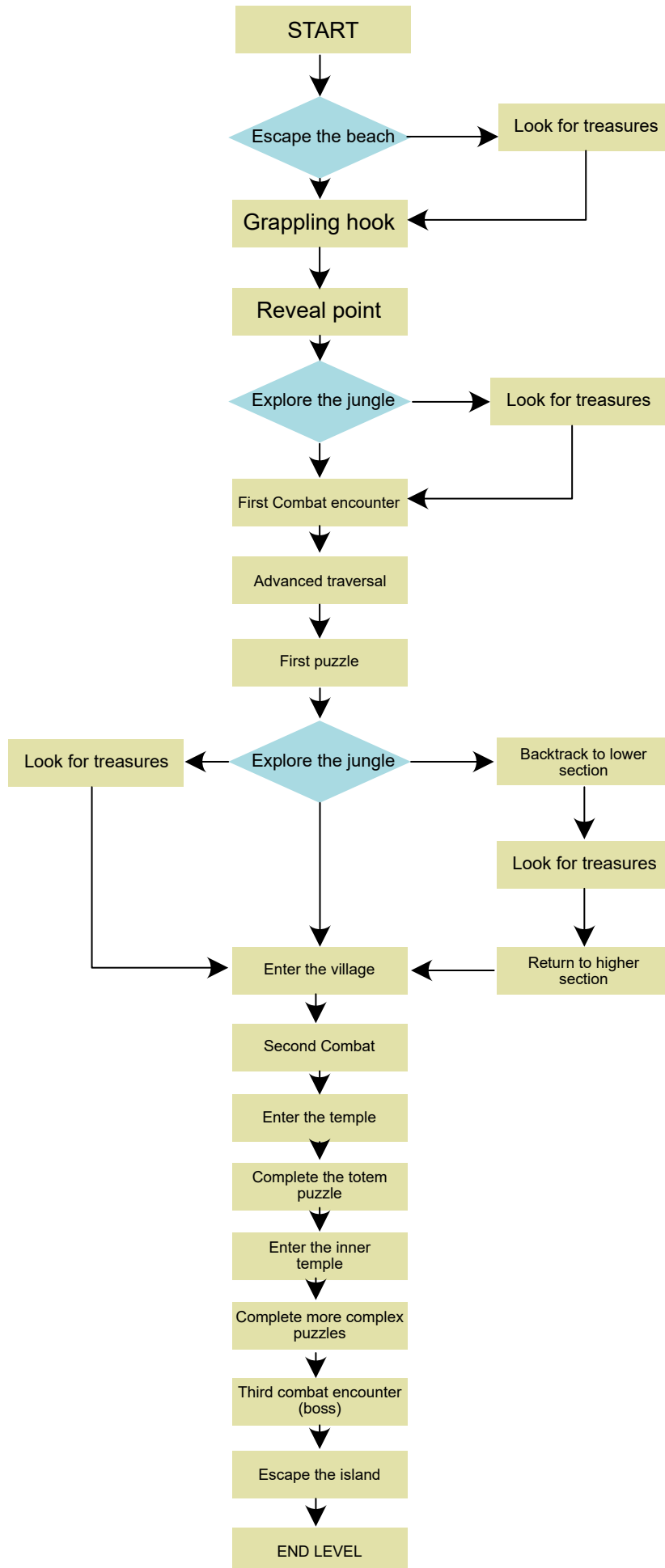
Pressure Plate

Rotatable Totem

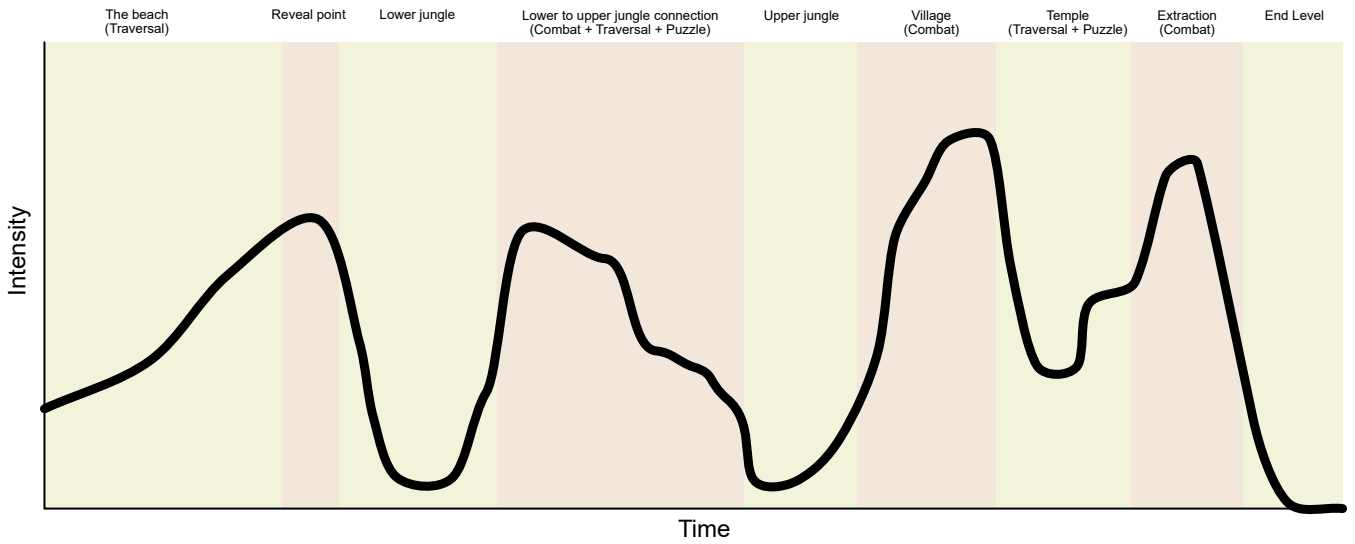
Pushable Object

Draw Bridge

Flow chart



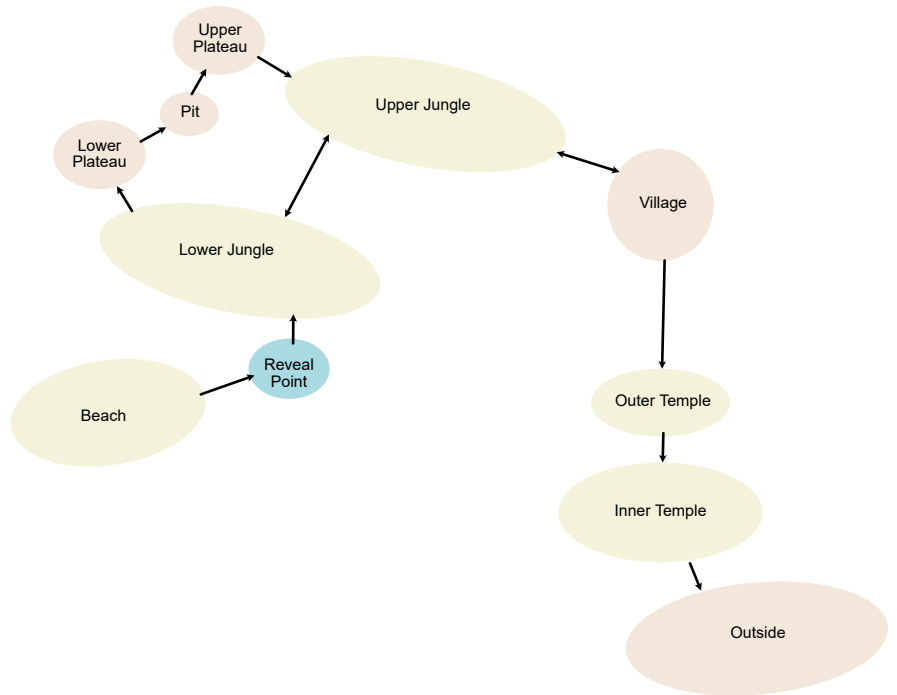
Pacing graph



Bubble diagram

GUIDE

- ↔ Two-way connection
- One-way connection
- Low intensity area
- High intensity area
- Reveal point



Additional References



Just Cause 3



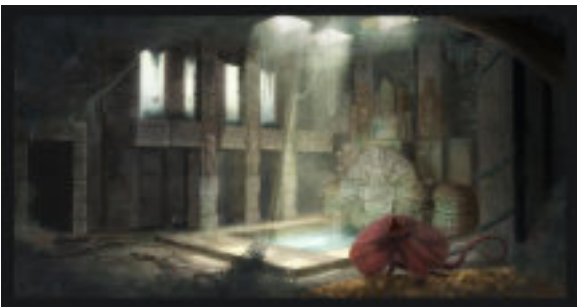
Just Cause 4



Far Cry 3



Shadow of the Colossus



Mayan temple by lukkar (Deviant Art)



Jungle Village by Rebecca On (ArtStation)

Post Mortem

Working on this level was an eye-opening experience. I have learned so much about Unreal Engine (like for example the fact that timelines exists) and Level Design (Valves and transition points) that I will be processing this knowledge for a while now.

It also shown, that I'm not that good at prototyping the level on paper (First draft resembled more of a LEGO set than a level for a game), but also, that I love bubble diagrams as they are simple, fast to make, easy to understand and great for fast iterations. It's best shown through the fact that the first bubble diagram we recieved is way different from the one I ended up with. Still the same idea, but different execution.

I have also made quite a bit of blueprints for this level. For example the elevator. Although made before I knew timelines exists (seriously, once I learned of them, I had them everywhere), but it functions. Totems were also a fun thing to make. Then there's the things I changed, like the respawns and movable boxes. Respawning was very strict, so I decoupled the points from kill triggers and now once you die, you get up and the last activated point. Boxes had a life of their own and were very difficult to use. I fortunately managed to get them into a usable state. Still not perfect, but better than before.

One thing that didn't worked out was AI. It technically is there (the first combat encounter), but it was so difficult to work with that I decided to just use dummies as stand-ins. Even though I like tinkering with blueprints, I'm no programmer so that was way beyond my reach to make work.

The temple is another thing I'm not particularly fond of as I was on a low point when making it, so it didn't really lived up to what I originally envisioned. It's hard to say what I would do differently. It's a miracle that I even managed to do something as for days I couldn't even touch it. I guess it is like that sometimes, I just have to live with it and move on.

Which I did and I finished it, which is not something I was able to do for years. So having this completed really boosts my confidence for another project. I had great fun doing and I will definitely do it again.